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FLOOR DEBATE

February 6, 2001 LB 183

SPEAKER KRISTENSEN: Senator Janssen, you're recognized to open on LB 183.

SENATOR JANSSEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, members of the Legislature. LB 183 is a fairly simple bill. It would amend the Local Governmental Miscellaneous Expenditure Act to allow local governments to spend public funds for flowers or other appropriate memorials for the funeral of an elected or appointed official, a former elected or appointed official, an employee or a former employee in recognition of their service to local government. The bill was heard on January 24th in the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee. It advanced to General File on a 8 to 0 vote, and I'd like to explain to you a little bit about what happens now. Before making an expenditure, the governing body shall, by official action after a public hearing, establish a uniform policy which would set the dollar limit or other limitations on such expenditures. The same...this is the same procedure that is used for recognizing employees with plaques, certificates or other what you might call recognitions for someone who is on a...has been on the council but not deceased. After they're deceased then they can't allow these expenditures. The change made in this bill would allow the local governments to honor officials/employees who have provided service to the local government. In many cases, these officials or employees have served the local political subdivision for decades. It seems only right that we allow local governments to recognize this service and honor their families by sending flowers or other memorials to a funeral. This same bill was advanced last year to General File, however, we ran out of time and didn't...it didn't make it to the floor. A little background on that: the Local Governmental Miscellaneous Expenditure Act was adopted in 1993 to clarify what expenditures by local entities were appropriate. It was the result of an opinion by the Accountability and Disclosure Commission, which called into question certain kinds of payments made by local entities. This opinion stated that providing flowers or memorials at a funeral were not allowed. The act addressed many of these issues raised in the opinion, however, one issue that was not changed was providing for flowers or memorials at funerals. This bill would